

Governor Carney, DNREC, DelDOT and partners break ground for saltmarsh boardwalk project at Slaughter Beach

SLAUGHTER BEACH – This morning, Delaware Governor John Carney joined DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin, DelDOT Secretary Jennifer Cohan, state legislators, conservation partners, and the community of Slaughter Beach to celebrate the groundbreaking for the Marvel Saltmarsh Preserve Boardwalk project. The boardwalk and overlook will enable visitors, including schoolchildren, to walk out onto the saltmarsh to view and experience this amazing Bayshore ecosystem and its natural resources up close.

Photo: Governor John Carney, DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin, DelDOT Secretary Jennifer Cohan, Slaughter Beach Mayor Harry Ward, Federal Highway Administration Division Administrator Mary Ridgeway, Delaware Nature Society Acting Executive Director Anne Harper and DNS members, state legislators, Marvel family members, and residents break ground for the Marvel Saltmarsh Preserve Boardwalk.

“The scenic overlook that we are building here will provide a new opportunity to enjoy this saltmarsh landscape and a diverse array of wildlife year round,” said Governor Carney. “This project will help Delawareans, and visitors to our state, discover our state’s rich history and natural heritage, as well as the Bayshore’s natural beauty.”

“This project is a major enhancement to a premier destination in our Bayshore region, giving visitors unique access to a new outdoor recreation opportunity,” said Secretary Garvin. “Visitors also will have the opportunity to learn about our

dynamic coastal marsh systems, the plants and animals they support, and the coastal communities like Slaughter Beach that depend on them.”

“DelDOT is pleased to partner with DNREC and the Town of Slaughter Beach in the construction of a scenic overlook along the Delaware Nature Society’s Marvel tract,” said Secretary Cohan. “This overlook will be another great addition to the Delaware Bayshore Byway that showcases our beautiful state.”

Owned and managed by the Delaware Nature Society, the 109-acre Marvel Saltmarsh Preserve was donated to DNS in 1988 by the Marvel family of Milford – Randy and Linda Marvel, and Harvey and Kate Marvel, who attended today’s event. The preserve is home to many species, including fiddler crabs, blue crabs, grass shrimp, mollusks, and insects, as well as being a premier birding destination, with marsh wrens, seaside sparrows, clapper rails, great egrets, willets, and osprey. The Y-shaped, accessible boardwalk design, totaling approximately 345 feet, will provide access to a marsh pool at one end and a view of a nearby constructed osprey nest platform from an elevated observation platform at the other end. The boardwalk will enhance the environmental education programs DNS hosts for more than 1,000 students and families annually at the preserve.

The Marvel Saltmarsh Preserve scenic overlook project was made possible by a partnership between DNREC, DelDOT, DNS, and the Town of Slaughter Beach, with funding for design, engineering, and construction coming from multiple sources. Initial design and engineering funding was provided through a grant from DNREC’s Outdoor Recreation Parks and Trails grant program, with additional funding from DNREC’s Delaware Bayshore Initiative. Project construction funding is from the U.S Department of Transportation’s Federal Highway Administration via DelDOT’s Transportation Alternatives Program, which requires matching funds from a sponsor. With a long-term land lease between DNS and the town in place, Slaughter Beach is

serving as the match sponsor, with a second grant from DNREC's Outdoor Recreation Parks and Trails grant program. State Senator Gary Simpson and State Representative Harvey Kenton provided additional state funding from the Community Transportation Fund. The Delaware Nature Society also assisted and supported Slaughter Beach's fundraising efforts by acquiring additional funds from the Delmarva Ornithological Society, Milford Lions Club, and Dogfish Head Brewery.

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